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Address by the President
to the Georgetown Center for
Strategic and International Studies

FACT SHEET

The President today addressed a National Leadership Forum sponsored by the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. The subject of the Forum was "Forging a Bipartisan Foreign and Defense Policy." The President addressed this subject with a view toward America's foreign policy challenges for the 1980s. In doing so, the President emphasized two basic points:

- America's foreign policy goals can be achieved only if America's idealism is joined with American realism.
- American foreign policy can be effectively advanced and sustained only if we restore bipartisan consensus in support of it.

I. IDEALISM AND REALISM

(A) Two Great Goals

The President noted that "all Americans share two great goals for foreign policy:

- (1) "a safer world; and
- (2) "a world in which individual rights can be respected and precious values may flourish."

(B) Still, "a Troubled World"

He pointed out, however, that while these goals are "at the heart of America's traditional idealism," "the world in which these fundamental goals are so widely shared is a troubled world:"

- Many citizens of the developed world continue to live in fear of conflict and the threat of nuclear war.
- All around the globe, terrorists threaten innocent people and civilized values.
- And in developing countries, the dreams of human progress have, too often, been lost to violent revolution and dictatorship.

(C) The Need for Practical Means and Realistic Principles

The President stated that: "Quite obviously, the widespread desire for a safer and more humane world is -- by itself -- not enough to create such a world.... We must go beyond honorable intentions ... to practical means."

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He argued that, in doing so, we must be guided by these key principles:

- Realism. "Reality is often harsh. We will not make it less so if we do not first see it for what it is."
- Strength. "Without it there can be no effective diplomacy and negotiation; no secure democracy and peace. Conversely, weakness or hopeful passivity are only self-defeating. They invite the very aggression and instability they would seek to avoid."
- Economic Growth. "Neither strength nor creativity can be achieved or sustained without economic growth -- both at home and abroad."
- Intelligence. "Our policies cannot be effective unless the information on which they are based is accurate, timely, and complete."
- Shared Responsibility with Allies. We seek and need partnership with our allies, "sharing burdens in pursuit of our common goals."
- Non-aggression. "We have no territorial ambitions. We occupy no foreign lands. We build our strength only to assure deterrence, and to secure our interests if deterrence fails."
- Dialogue with Adversaries. "Though we must be honest in recognizing fundamental differences with our adversaries, we must always be willing to resolve these differences by peaceful means."
- Bipartisanship at Home. "In our two-party democracy, an effective foreign policy must begin with bipartisanship -- and the sharing of responsibility for a safer and more humane world must begin at home."

II. AMERICAN RENEWAL

(A) "American Leadership is Back"

- "Gone are the days when the United States was perceived as a rudderless superpower, a helpless hostage to world events. American leadership is back."

(B) Peace Through Strength

"Peace through strength is not a slogan, it is a fact of life."

- Restored Deterrence. "The simple fact is that, in the last half of the 1970s, we were not deterring -- as events from Angola to Afghanistan made clear. Today we are, and that fact has fundamentally altered the future for millions of human beings."
- Strengthened Defense and Intelligence. "We've made dramatic progress."

-- During the 1970s, real defense spending declined; at the end of the decade it was 20% below the 1970 level. (By contrast, non-defense spending almost doubled in real terms.) Defense spending as a share of GNP dropped from 8.3% in 1970 to about 5% by 1979.

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-- In constant dollars, the 1984 Defense program is 40% above the 1980 level. The estimated Defense spending gap between the U.S. and the Soviet Union has been reduced by about 50%.

-- Readiness, sustainability, recruiting, retention, and force structure are all improved.

-- Intelligence personnel and resources, which were drastically reduced in the '70s, have been increased. New and improved systems have provided a more responsive, flexible, and effective capability for collection and analysis.

- Economic Recovery. "We have transformed a no-growth economy into a dynamic growth economy."

-- Inflation was 12.4% in 1980; 13.3% in 1979. Now it is under 5% -- where it has been since 1982.

-- Unemployment was rising in January 1981. Now it is falling -- a growing economy is putting one third of a million Americans back to work each month.

-- The prime interest rate hit 21.5% at the end of 1980. Now it is 11.5% -- down 10 full percentage points.

-- Net energy imports are down from almost 6 million barrels/day to 3.8 million.

(C) A "Stark Contrast".

"Our principles don't involve just rebuilding our strength; they also tell us how to use it. We remain true to the principle of non-aggression. On an occasion when the United States, at the request of its neighbors, did use force -- in Grenada -- we acted decisively, but only after it was clear a bloodthirsty regime had put American and Grenadian lives, and the security of neighboring islands in danger. As soon as stability and freedom were restored on the island, we left. The Soviet Union had no such legitimate justification for its massive invasion of Afghanistan 4 years ago. And today, 115,000 occupation troops remain there. The United States, by stark contrast, occupies no foreign nation -- nor do we seek to."

III. FOUR GREAT CHALLENGES

"If Republicans and Democrats will join together to confront four great challenges to American foreign policy in the '80s, then we can and we will make great strides toward a safer and more humane world."

(A) Challenge Number One: "to reduce the risk of nuclear war, and to reduce the levels of nuclear armaments in a way that also reduces the risk they will ever be used."

- "We have no higher challenge, for a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."
- "Though we and the Soviet Union differ markedly, living in this nuclear age makes it imperative that we talk with each other."
- "But merely to be against nuclear war is not enough to prevent it.... Deterrence has been and will remain the cornerstone of our national security policy to defend freedom and preserve peace."

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- By the beginning of this decade, we faced three growing problems:
 - the Soviet SS-20 monopoly in Europe and Asia;
 - the vulnerability of our land-based ICBM force; and
 - the failure of arms control agreements to slow the overall growth in strategic weapons. (Note: In 1969, when SALT I negotiations began, the Soviet Union had 1500 strategic nuclear weapons. Today, their arsenal can grow to 15,000 nuclear weapons or more and still stay within past arms control agreements, including SALT II guidelines.)
- We have offered proposals to reverse the arms build-up and help bring a more stable balance at lower force levels -- at the START talks, the INF talks, the MBFR talks, and, shortly, at the Conference on Disarmament with our new initiative to prohibit chemical weapons. (Note: Our flexibility in the START and INF negotiations has been demonstrated by numerous substantive modifications to our positions; but these have been met only by the silence of Soviet walkouts.)
- We have also proposed to reduce the risks of war in time of crisis -- with measures to improve direct U.S.-U.S.S.R. communications and increase mutual confidence.
- We have rejected simplistic solutions -- a moratorium on INF deployment, unilateral cancellation of the MX, an unverifiable and destabilizing freeze -- because these are counter-productive. "Granted it is easy to call for arms agreements; it is more difficult to support patient, firm and fair negotiations with those who wish to see how much we will first compromise with ourselves."
- "If the new Soviet leadership is truly devoted to building a safer and more humane world, rather than expanding armed conquests, it will find a sympathetic partner in the West."

(B) Challenge Number Two: to strengthen the basis for stability in troubled and strategically sensitive regions.

- "Regional tensions often begin in long-standing social, political, and economic inequities, and in ethnic and religious disputes. Yet, throughout the 1970s, increased Soviet support for terrorism, insurgency, and aggression -- coupled with a perception of weakening U.S. power and resolve -- greatly exacerbated these tensions."
- "Effective regional stabilization requires a balanced approach -- a mix of economic aid, security assistance and diplomatic mediation -- tailored to the needs of each region." We have sought to apply this approach in southern Africa, in the Mideast, and in Central America.
- Perhaps the best articulation of this comprehensive approach is reflected in the report and recommendations of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America.
 - "Economic aid alone cannot stop Cuban and Soviet-sponsored guerrillas ... and neither individual rights nor economic health can be advanced if stability is not secured."
 - "Our proposals are not cheap, quick, or easy. But the cost of this commitment is bargain-basement compared to the tremendous sacrifices we will have to make if we do nothing, or do too little."

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- "Because effective regional problem-solving requires a balanced and sustained approach, it is essential that the Congress give full not piecemeal support."

(C) Challenge Number Three: to expand opportunities for economic development and personal freedom.

- "We must resist the sugar-coated poison of protectionism." At June's London Economic Summit, we can lay the groundwork for a new round of negotiations that will open markets for our exports of goods and services -- "and stimulate greater growth, efficiency and jobs for all."
- "We are helping developing countries grow by presenting a fresh view of development -- the magic of the market place."
 - Last year, developing nations earned twice as much from exports to the United States as they received in aid from all other nations combined.
 - Practical programs like the Caribbean Basin Initiative will strengthen the private sectors of some 20 Caribbean neighbors.
 - We have recently proposed to the Congress a new economic initiative for Africa -- also designed to support the growth of private enterprise.
- More U.S. trade now crosses the Pacific than the Atlantic Ocean. "I see America and our Pacific neighbors as nations of the future, going forward together in a mighty enterprise to build dynamic growth."
- "We seek to promote not just material products, but the values of faith and human dignity for which America and all democratic nations stand."
 - We have established the National Endowment for Democracy.
 - We are modernizing the Voice of America and other broadcasting facilities, and are working on Radio Marti, a voice of truth to the people of Cuba.
 - The spread of democratic institutions is increasing. In our own hemisphere, 27 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are either democracies or formally embarked on a democratic transition. This represents 90% of the region's population -- up from less than 50% a decade ago.

(D) Challenge Number Four: to restore bipartisan consensus in support of U.S. foreign policy.

- In the 1970s, over 100 separate prohibitions and restrictions on Executive Branch authority to formulate and implement foreign policy were enacted.
- "The most far-reaching consequence" of the past decade's Congressional activism is this: "Bipartisan consensus-building has become a central responsibility of Congressional leadership as well as of Executive leadership. If we are to have sustainable foreign policy, Congress must support the practical details of policy, not just the general goals."
- We have demonstrated the capacity for such jointly responsible leadership in certain areas (e.g., Scowcroft Commission re strategic forces).

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- But we have seen setbacks, too. "Indeed, where we have foundered in regional stabilization, it has been because the Congress has failed to provide support. Half-way measures -- refusing to take responsibility for means -- produce the worst possible results."

-- "Second-guessing" in Lebanon "severely undermined our policy."

-- "Wavering on support for the Jackson Plan ... can only encourage the enemies of democracy who are determined to wear us down."
- "Unfortunately, many in the Congress seem to believe they are still in the troubled Vietnam era -- with their only task to be vocal critics, not responsible partners in developing positive, practical programs to solve real problems."
- "Consensus on the broad goals of a safer and more humane world is easy to achieve. The harder part is making progress developing concrete, realistic means to reach those goals."
- "Legislators must realize that they, too, are partners. They have a responsibility to go beyond mere criticism to consensus-building that will produce positive, practical and effective action."

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